

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 PRS-01 CIAE-00

INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 L-03 /048 W

----- 118139

R 281215Z OCT 76

FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2907

INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMEMBASSY NASSAU

AMEMBASSY PORT

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINGSTON 4655

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, JM, GY, CU, US

SUBJECT: AIR CUBANA CRASH AND US RELATIONSHIPS WITH GUYANA AND
JAMAICA

1. GUYANESE HIGH COMMISSIONER FREDERICK H. TALBOT DURING
COURSE OF LUNCHEON OCTOBER 26 (ARRANGED AT BEHEST OF TALBOT)
TOLD CHARGE THAT HE WAS DEEPLY CONCERNED, AS A FRIEND OF THE
US, WITH CURRENT DETERIORATION IN GUYANA/US RELATIONS.

2. AFTER REMINDING CHARGE THAT HE HAD PREVIOUSLY SERVED AS
GUYANESE AMBASSADOR TO US AND HAD BEEN EDUCATED IN THE US,
TALBOT STATED HE HAD JUST RETURNED FROM GEORGETOWN WHERE HE
FOUND THE ATMOSPHERE CHARGED WITH EMOTION AND BOTH PRIME
MINISTER BURNHAM AND FONMIN WILLS OPERATING UNDER EXTRA-
ORDINARY STRESS. HE SAID HE HAD PARTICIPATED IN A SERIES OF
MEETINGS JUST BEFORE BURNHAM'S SPEECH SUGGESTING US
COMPLICITY IN AIR CUBANA CRASH. TALBOT COMMENTED
BURNHAM MAY HAVE GONE TOO FAR IN STATEMENT, BUT WAS
SO WROUGHT-UP EMOTIONALLY AND WAS UNDER SUCH PRESSURE
FROM BOTH STUDENT GROUPS AND HIS OWN LEFT THAT HE
PROBABLY WAS NOT CAPABLE OF ACTING MORE CAUTIOUSLY.

3. ASKED WHETHER BURNHAM, WILLS, AND OTHER SENIOR GOG
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OFFICIALS REALLY BELIEVED USG WAS DESTABILIZING

GUYANA AND JAMAICA, AND HAD BEEN INVOLVED IN AIR CUBANA CRASH, TALBOT SAID NO, BUT THAT THEY DID BELIEVE THE CIA WAS INVOLVED IN DESTABILIZATION AND WAS INDIRECTLY OR DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN THE CRASH. CHARGE POINTED OUT CIA IS PART OF USG AND DOES NOT ACT INDEPENDENTLY. MOREOVER, EVEN THOUGH BURNHAM AND WILLS MIGHT BE ABLE TO CLAIM THEY DID NOT SPECIFICALLY NAME USG AS THE "DESTABILIZER", THE CONTEXT AND THRUST OF THEIR REMARKS LEFT NO DOUBT IN THE MINDS OF THEIR AUDIENCES. TALBOT AGAIN ASSERTED USG WAS NOT THE TARGET FOR THESE CHARGES, BUT THE CIA WAS. HE SAID GOG IS CONVINCED CIA IS AUTONOMOUS AND OPERATES IN ITS OWN INTERESTS OR THE INTERESTS "OF OTHERS" WITHOUT THE KNOWLEDGE OF SENIOR USG OFFICIALS. TALBOT MADE CLEAR, DURING A LONG DRAWN OUT DISCUSSION, THAT HE HOLDS SIMILAR VIEWS. HE ALSO COMMENTED THAT THE SAME PROBLEM EXISTS IN JAMAICA ALTHOUGH PERHAPS TO A LESSER DEGREE.

4. TALBOT THEN LAUNCHED INTO AN APPEAL FOR A MAJOR EFFORT BY THE US ON THE ONE HAND AND JAMAICA AND GUYANA ON THE OTHER TO ESTABLISH A NEW DIALOGUE IN AN EFFORT TO PUT THE PAST BEHIND ALL OF US. HE SAID IT WAS NECESSARY FOR EACH TO HAVE A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE OTHERS' "REAL CONCERNS AND INTERESTS IN THE AREA", AND THIS CAN BEST BE ACCOMPLISHED BY A SERIES OF FRANK INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN LEADERS IN JAMAICA AND GUYANA AND A SENIOR AMERICAN OFFICIAL IN WHOM ALL CONCERNED IN FORMER TWO COUNTRIES HAVE PERSONAL THRUST AND FAITH. HE SUGGESTED THE BEST PERSON TO DO THIS, IN TERMS OF PERSONAL RAPPORT AND CONFIDENCE WITHIN THE REGION, WAS UNDER SECRETARY WILLIAM ROGERS, AND THE BEST TIMING WOULD BE SOON AFTER THE US ELECTIONS. IT WOULD BE INADVISABLE, HE SAID, TO WAIT TO THE NEW YEAR AND THE INAUGURATION OF EITHER FORD OR CARTER. CHARGE SAID HE WOULD PASS HIS VIEWS ON TO WASHINGTON BUT POINTED OUT THAT THERE HAD ALREADY BEEN DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN GUYANESE WITH SENIOR AMERICAN OFFICIALS WITHOUT ANY VISIBLE CONSEQUENCES AS YET. MOREOVER, BURNHAM'S ATTACK ON THE US FOLLOWED HIGH LEVEL USG ASSURANCES OF NON-USG INVOLVEMENT IN THE AIR CUBANA

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CRASH.

5. TOWARD THE END OF THE CONVERSATION TALBOT BROUGHT UP GEORGETOWN'S UNHAPPINESS WITH BROWN'S "BALD FACE LIAR COMMENT". TALBOT SAID THIS HAD CREATED A FUROR IN GEORGETOWN AND MANY WITHIN BURNHAM'S PARTY AND CABINET HAVE BEEN PRESSING BURNHAM FOR A BREAK IN RELATIONS WITH THE US -- IF AN APOLOGY IS NOT FORTHCOMING. CHARGE

TOLD TALBOT THAT WHILE LANGUAGE MAY HAVE BEEN TOUGH,
THE PROVOCATION WAS VERY GREAT AND IN FACT IRRESPONSIBLE
GIVEN THE FACTS OF THE SITUATION.

6. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH TALBOT HAS GONE OUT OF HIS WAY
IN THE PAST TO BE FRIENDLY TO THE AMBASSADOR, CHARGE,
AND OTHER EMBOFFS HERE, THIS IS THE FIRST OCCASION HE
HAS ATTEMPTED TO DISCUSS ANY SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES. HE
SEEMED GENUINELY CONCERNED THAT WE MAY BE HEADING FOR
A RUPTURE IN USG/GOG RELATIONSHIPS, AND WENT OUT OF HIS
WAY TO STRESS THE NEED FOR CONCILIATORY GESTURES ON
BOTH SIDES. THROUGHOUT THE CONVERSATION HE ATTEMPTED
TO GIVE AN IMPRESSION OF BEING PERSONALLY COSE TO BOTH
WILLS AND BURNHAM, ALTHOUGH OUR OWN IMPRESSION HERE
HAS BEEN THAT HE IS PRETTY MUCH A LIGHTWEIGHT --
AT LEAST WITHIN GEORGETOWN'S INNER GOVERNMENTAL AND
PARTY CIRCLES.

7. WE ALSO NOTE THAT IT IS INCONSISTENT FOR TALBOT TO
SUGGEST THE USG HAS NO CONTROL OVER CIA, BUT THAT RELATION-
SHIPS BETWEEN USG AND GUYANA AND JAMAICA CAN BE STRAIGHTENED
OUT WITH A VISIT BY A SENIOR USG OFFICIAL.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, AIRCRAFT ACCIDENTS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 28 OCT 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: coburnhl
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976KINGST04655
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760403-0002
From: KINGSTON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19761010/aaaaahxc.tel
Line Count: 138
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: coburnhl
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 11 FEB 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <11 FEB 2004 by GarlanWA>; APPROVED <25 OCT 2004 by coburnhl>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AIR CUBANA CRASH AND US RELATIONSHIPS WITH GUYANA AND JAMAICA
TAGS: PFOR, JM, GY, CU, CUBANA AIRLINES
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006